

Valley to have own PBS outlet

By CHARLIE CRIXELL
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Backed by a pledge of more than \$1 million from the Catholic Diocese of Brownsville, public television — referred to as "The Nation's Treasury" — will be returning to the Valley in May 1985.

At a Wednesday press conference in Harlingen, Bishop John J. Fitzpatrick proclaimed the Diocese's support for KEDV-TV, a non-commercial, ultra high frequency (UHF) station, as "an investment in education and in the future ... an investment to help our Valley grow."

Besides the Diocese pledge of \$1.2 million to help cover expenses to get KEDV on the air, the bishop, reading from a prepared statement, added that the Diocese would contribute \$200,000 annually thereafter for operational purposes.

"This is a large investment, but the potential benefits are great," Fitzpatrick said. "The Diocese will maintain prudent and equitable direction of the station to ensure that this potential is reached."

That does not mean, stressed KEDV General Manager John Si-

queiros, that the station will be flooding the airwaves with religious programming. Siqueiros, noting that public television has been referred to as the "Nation's Treasury" because of its educational, informational and cultural potential, said that only about 10 percent of KEDV's programming will be devoted to non-denominational religious programs.

The 10 percent religious programming will be fewer than a dozen hours a week of "subject matter acceptable to people of all faith in the Valley," Fitzpatrick said.

"We plan on having about 65 percent of the programming come from the excellent offerings of the PBS (Public **Broadcasting** System) network," Siqueiros said. "Another 25 percent will consist of instructional and human development programs, many presented in conjunction with local schools, colleges and the university (Pan American)."

Siqueiros also brushed aside the fact that KEDV will occupy the same channel number — 60 — that another Valley public TV station, KZLN, once did. After a May 1982 start, KZLN was forced to leave the air in July 1983 due to

monetary and management problems.

"Our concept has been one of looking ahead," Siqueiros said. "We're not concerned with past failure. That doesn't bother us."

In order for the station, which is to be based in Harlingen, to even make it on the air, however, it must raise \$2.2 million to purchase equipment, erect a transmitting tower in La Feria and build a studio on diocese-owned land south of Valley Baptist Medical Center in Harlingen. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has already awarded a license to **RGV Educational Broadcasting** Inc., which was formed by the Diocese of Brownsville to pursue that goal.

RGV chairman Ruben Cardenas of McAllen was on hand Wednesday to explain the company's intentions of raising the target money by January 1985 through "The Founders' Campaign," KEDV's capital fund drive. He said that **RGV** has not met any obstacles in its quest to raise the money, noting, however, that the campaign is just getting started.

"With the support of individuals, institutions, businesses and

foundations here in the Valley and in Texas we are confident of success," Cardenas said.

Fitzpatrick said 35 of 40 people already approached for financial support have pledged large sums.

Once the station goes on the air, it will be available to all televisions in the Valley equipped with a UHF antenna, Cardenas said. He said most Valley TVs already have such a device "so they can pick up another Valley UHF station (KVEO-Channel 23)." The antenna is not necessary for Valley cable subscribers. Heritage Cablevision, which currently offers a Corpus Christi-based PBS station, KEDT, is required by law to include the local PBS affiliate. General manager Neil Haman, who was unavailable for comment, has said that Heritage would retain KEDT as well as KEDV.

Within the next 90 days, the station will be seeking individuals to serve on a community advisory board to advise on the Valley's programming needs. Community leaders may contact the temporary KEDV office at 320 E. Van Buren St., Harlingen, or telephone 421-4111.